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A

LETTER

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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CHARLES JAMES FOX,

ON

THE LATE CONDUCT

OF

HIS PARTY.

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MDCCLXXXIX.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

SIR,

WHEN the Conſtitution is aſſaulted, and the Rights of Parliament threatened with invaſion, it is the duty of honeſt men to exert themſelves, and endeavour to obviate the impending danger. If this maxim be true in general, it is more eſpecially ſo, when a deſperate and wicked Faction avail themſelves of a national calamity, in order to accompliſh their deſigns: in proportion to the weakneſs of that power

which formerly controlled them, the vigilence of the people ſhould increaſe, and, perhaps, there never was a period in which our united efforts were more requiſite, than at preſent.

It ſeldom happens, that the cauſe of Monarchs is the cauſe of Liberty ;—it is a ſingular concurrence, reſerved for the preſent criſis, when the ſame blow which is levelled at the King, endangers the Conſtitution ;—the ſame hand which graſps at his prerogative, menaces our Rights ;—when we are embarked in a common cauſe with him, and muſt either vindicate his intereſts, or deſert our own.

Theſe motives have induced me to declare my ſentiments on the conduct of your Party ; and, if in the diſcuſſion, I frequently expreſs myſelf with energy let it be remembered that, at ſuch a moment, moderation would be almoſt criminal ; and that, when we are attacked with violence, we ſhould certainly defend ourſelves with ſpirit. For my

my own part, I confeſs my enthuſiaſm for the public good; and pity the heart that can beat with languid temperance, when our prime intereſts are at ſtake.

I think, Sir, you will not deny, that the conduct of public men, is liable to public inveſtigation, and(if criminal) to public cenſure. I therefore ſhall write with freedom, and I addreſs myſelf to you, as the oſtenſible Leader of Oppoſition; others for aught I know, may have greater influence at Carlton-houſe, and may have been more employed in wheedling the Recruits, and bribing the Deſerters; but *you*, at leaſt have the odious diſtinction of heading the *trained-bands*; to you, therefore, I apply, and, through you, to the whole body of your Faction.

It is natural, at this momentous period, to ſurvey the character of thoſe, who are deſtined to fill the offices of State. In this country an Oppoſition (if poſſeſſed of any merit) ſtands always upon favourable ground;

the people being naturally jealous of a Miniſter, and readily ſupporting thoſe, whoſe occupation is to ſcrutinize his conduct.—How then does it happen, that, with this circumſtance in your favour, the tide of popularity ſhould ſet againſt you; that the bare proſpect of your appointment, ſhould create an univerſal panick, and debaſe the credit of the nation? We may trace the cauſe of this phaenomenon in the ſketch of your public and private life: born with talents to adorn ſociety and benefit the nation, you have conſtantly miſapplied them to the propagation of immorality, and the indulgence of your own ambition. Your partizans may boaſt of your merits with the people; I proteſt, for my part, that I am unacquainted with thoſe merits, and ignorant of any ſervice you may have rendered to your country.

To you, indeed, and to ſome of your aſſociates, we are indebted for the ſingular diſtinction between private and public character; a refinement, too ſubtile for my intel-

lects

lects to comprehend. So antiquated are my notions, that I ſtill conſider private reputation as the ſafeſt ground of public confidence, and feel an unconquerable impulſe to miſtruſt the *official virtue* which is grafted on *domeſtic vice*. If a man be profligate in morals; if he live by depredations, on ſociety; if he defraud his tradeſmen, if he plunder at the club, *or pilfer at the Opera*, am I not juſtified in ſuſpecting, that he will pillage the whole nation if he has it in his power? why ſhould he ſpare the ſtranger, when he will not ſpare his comrades? I cannot place dependance on his principles, I can fancy no ſecurity againſt his abuſe of power, except by withholding the power itſelf. As a private man, I care not to what ſtrumpet you attach yourſelf; I care not who are the companions of your debaucheries, or your partners in the Faro-Bank: yet you ought to know, Sir, that ſomething is due to decency: a fool may obtain forgiveneſs for the violation of decorum; but a man of ſenſe, who oſtentatiouſly diſplays his vices, and ſets opinion at defiance, commits an inſult

on the underſtanding, as well as on the morals, of mankind.

To you, alſo, we are indebted, that women, of the higheſt ranks, have departed from the modeſt and meek deportment, that once characterized the Engliſh Ladies. You have taught them to aſſociate with ſhameleſs proſtitutes, and drunken voters: you perſuaded them to mingle in the tumult of Elections, to expoſe their perſons to degrading inſults, to adulterate the true dignity and ſterling value of their ſex. I know not what gratitude theſe ladies may profeſs for your kind inſtructions; but ſure I am, that no man, who is ſolicitous for the honour of his wife or daughters, can thank you for procuring ſuch examples for their imitation.

But, Sir, let us admit your beloved maxim, that political reputation ſhould be totally unconnected with private qualities, and that public virtue is compatible with domeſtic vice: yet even upon this ground, you

you are not entitled to our confidence; for how can we rely upon the conduct of that man, whoſe principles are ſubject to perpetual fluctuation? if you were ſteady in your ſentiments, whatever they might be, we could determine how far to deal with you; but if they vary with every change of circumſtance; if you brawl for privilege to entrap the whigs, and bully for prerogative to allure the tories, no party can with prudence truſt you. Your conduct has, indeed, been conſiſtent in one reſpect, and only one; it has uniformly been directed to the views of your own ambition, without regard to conſtitutional motives, or to national advantage:—but, independently of this conſideration, no two men were ever more at variance with each other, than you are with yourſelf. In the circle of political opinions, your career began at the point of arbitrary power, and after flaming through the oppoſite degrees of licentious freedom, you waned in the path of ariſtocracy, and are now returned to your primitive ſituation; the champion of prerogative, the deadly foe to liberty.

Why, Sir, I thought that even Mr. *P——s*, though allured by the promiſed honours of a Peerage, would have ſhrunk from ſuch glaring inconſiſtency. Alas! can we blame the gentleman for wiſhing to eſcape the diſgraceful overthrow that awaits him in the country?

It muſt be owned that you are wonderfully ſkilled in contradictions, the moſt eccentric alchemiſt could not imagine a mixture more diſcordant, than your hateful union* with *Lord North*, an inſtance of abandoned proſtitution which we have not yet forgotten, nor ever can forget, whilſt we remember *Mr. Fox.* —— But, without recurring to that memorable period, let us contraſt your preſent doctrine with profeſſions of a later date. I ſuppoſe you recollect the time, when you maintained the omnipotence

*Ambitio multos mortales falſos fieri ſubegit; aliud clauſum in pectore, aliud promtum in linguâ habere; *Amicitias Inimicitiasqu.*, non ex re, ſed *ex commodo* æſtimare; magiſque vultum, quam ingenium bonum habere. Sall: in bell: Cat:

potence of the Houſe of Commons, which you *then* were pleaſed to dignify with the name of Parliament. You now aſſert, that all the legiſlative Powers are veſted in the *Prince of Wales*; for ſurely to transfer the Sovereign authority is an act of Legiſlation. You formerly declared that a Miniſter ought not to retain his place, much leſs to undertake it, without the confidence of the Houſe of Commons: by what ſubtilty of Logic will you reconcile your preſent conduct to that aſſertion? although, when you ſucceed to power, *Mr. Pitt* may nobly ſcorn to practiſe the indiſcriminate oppoſition, which he has experienced from you; it will ſtill be undeniably true, that you poſſeſs not the confidence of Parliament, nor any glimpſe of national eſteem.—There was a moment too, when you thought that majorities in the Houſe of Commons were entitled, not only to reſpect, but to the ſubmiſſion of his *Majeſty* and the Houſe of Peers. What is the language of to-day? Why, that majorities are nothing, and are not to be regarded. Whence we may draw the following concluſion,

cluſion, *viz.* that ſuperior numbers are infallible, if obedient to your dictate, but erroneous and contemptible whenever they diſſent from it: nay, your preſent doctrine is not only contradictory of that which you formerly profeſſed, but cannot be reconciled even to itſelf: for whilſt you aſſert that the Rights of the reigning Monarch are defeaſible, and actually null; you maintain that thoſe of the *Heir Apparent* are *indefeaſible*; which amounts to this, that Poſſeſſion is vacancy, and that Reverſion is true Poſſeſſion. In ſhort, Sir, it would be tedious, and almoſt impoſſible, to purſue you through the labyrinth of incoherencies in which you are involved, and from which you could not diſengage yourſelf by explanation or retraction. It is indeed remarkable that all the Chiefs of oppoſition have been obliged to qualify or diſavow the doctrine, and expreſſions which they have advanced: one of them, however, notwithſtanding the verſatility of his genius, and his turn for quibble, has "damned himſelf to everlaſting fame," by threatening the Houſe of Commons

mons with the anger of the *Prince of Wales*, unleſs they acquieſced in his uſurpation: in the preſent age a Parliament of France would not have endured the menace. We may reaſonably judge that a cauſe is bad, when it cannot be ſupported without ſubterfuge and equivocation. That the maniac *Burke*, ſhould commit egregious blunders, is not ſurpriſing; but that the ſubtle *Sheridan*, and the wily *Loughborough* ſhould be entangled in their own trammels, is a proof of the ſad ſhifts to which they are reduced. I hope experience will ſoon convince them, that, crooked policy is a weed which thrives not in Britiſh Soil. After this ſhort examination of your character and principles, it is but juſt to add that, bad as they appear, ſome Members of the *Pandemonium* are even worſe. You are truly ſingular in the choice of your connexions; ſurrounded by Men of notorious depravity, ruined in their fortunes, deſperate in enterprize; whoſe combination is a morbid humour in the body politic of this Country, a foul diſeaſe in our moral conſtitution, which, if ſuffered to increaſe,

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will render us diſguſting and infectious to all Europe. I know not whether we are more diſgraced by the exiſtence of ſuch Men,* and ſuch principles as they profeſs, or more honoured by oppoſing them with firmneſs and ſucceſs.

I do believe that *ſome* of that ſociety are ripe for deeds the moſt atrocious, and would rather perpetrate any act of deſperation, than reſign their Aſiatic dreams. I know the proceedings at that community of which it is almoſt ignominious to be a member—I know the barbarous jeſts, the indecent language they have held on a melancholy ſubject: I have heard expreſſions at which virtue would ſwell with indignation, and humanity would ſhrink with horror.

I ſhall

* Nam quicumque impudicus, adulter, ganeo aleâ, manu, ventre, pene, bona patria laceraverat, quique alienum æs grande conflaverat; ---poſtremò omnes quos flagitium, egeſtas, conſcius animus exagitabat. *Hi Catilinæ proximi, familiareſque erant.* Sall: in bell; Cat:

I ſhall be told perhaps, that the perſons of whom I ſpeak are Men of Faſhion, Honour and Liberality: I care not under what title you ſpecify their qualities; the perverſion of language cannot alter facts. *Jam pridem nos vera rerum vocabula amiſimus; quia* BONA ALIENA LARGIRI, *Liberalitas*;* MALARUM RERUM AUDACIA, *fortitudo vocatur.*

However, I am willing to allow, that in this farrago, there are ſome *ingredients* of a better quality: ſome honeſty, and more talents; but, unhappily, they are not united: I defy you to produce a ſingle inſtance, in your Party, of an unimpeachable character, joined to great abilities.—If there be a man

* It is to be lamented that wit ſhould ever be miſapplied to the eſtabliſhment of immoral ſentiments. The author of "The School for Scandal," makes his hero, upon giving away a ſum of money which was due to his creditors, break forth into the following rhapſody; "Juſtice is an old, lame, hob-"bling beldam, and I cant get her to keep pace with genero-"ſity, for the ſoul of me." The author ſhould recollect that to laviſh the property of others, is no greater proof of *Generoſity* than of *Juſtice.*

man of this deſcription let him be produced—let him be the *real*, as well as *nominal* miniſter of the *Regent*: but, if no ſuch perſon can be found amongſt you, it is in vain to dwell upon the virtues of other men: we are not to learn, that good hearts may be duped by deſigning men.

Beſides, we have ſeen already, that the rectitude of theſe very Men, may be warped by their ambition: we have not yet forgotten their concurrence in the odious coalition, the audacious India-Bill, and other execrable meaſures.

I confeſs too, that ſome of your adherents poſſeſs an hereditary title to reſpect, and a ſort of conſequence, derived as much from the merit of their progenitors, as from their elevated rank, or ample fortunes: but if theſe men depart from the line of conduct by which their Anceſtors were immortalized; if they commit a kind of parricide on the luſtre of their names, ſurely they become

more criminal, and more contemptible, than the very rabble whom they join.

Having taken this curſory view of our future governors, and the eſtimation in which they ſtand, I ſhall now proceed to the main object of this letter, the examination of their conduct in the preſent criſis.—As to the queſtion of inherent Right, I do not mean to enter upon that diſcuſſion; it already is decided by the voice of Parliament, and the ſentiments of all the nation. It appears, indeed, wonderful at firſt, that you ſhould dare to aſſert a doctrine ſo unpopular; a poſition not only falſe in principle, and dangerous in tendency, but incongruous with that ſyſtem of high-flown liberty, which you have ſometimes found convenient to maintain. But the wonder ceaſes, when we conſider that you no longer ſtand upon the ground of popular approbation, but upon that of Royal influence; that your object is in fact the ſame, though you purſue it in an oppoſite direction; and that, ſince you cannot be the Miniſter of the People,

People, you are determined to be the Miniſter of the Regent, in defiance of the People. In ſupport of this laudable reſolution, you have detected a ſpirit in the Conſtitution, with which the gentlemen of the Robe were certainly not acquainted; a ſpirit of uſurpation, a ſpirit of injuſtice and inhumanity, a ſpirit of ſucceſſion before a vacancy, and of powers not deriving from the people. Theſe, Sir, are diſcoveries which you may claim without any fear of competition; but which, I think, will not augment your popularity. With the fine drawn quibbles and elaborate logic, of my *Lord Chief Juſtice*, I have no concern, not having the honour of belonging to his profeſſion. But, I thank God that, without belonging to it, we may catch the genius of the Britiſh Conſtitution; without belonging to it, we may diſcriminate between good and evil, and imbibe the principles of humanity and juſtice. It is enough for me, that all the honeſt and able Lawyers in the kingdom reprobate your doctrine. Let us, therefore, quit a ſubject, of which, I believe, you heartily

repent the introduction; and inſtead of dwelling upon your *aſſertions*, let us conſider their obvious and direct *tendency*.

Sir, I maintain that they lead to treaſon; you will pardon the harſhneſs of this expreſſion; I am uſed to the language of ſimple truth, and love not to qualify or diſguiſe it. Sophiſtry and eloquence may give an air of plauſibility to any cauſe; but if the poſitions of your party be ſtripped of the meretricious colours with which they have been adorned, if ſubmitted to the eye of obſervation in their ſimple and unvarniſhed form, any one may perceive the diabolical attempt to tear the Diadem from the father's brow, and to place it on the ſon:---Not from attachment to the *Prince of Wales*, (he cannot ſurely be the dupe of ſuch profeſſions) but to ſatiate the ravenous cravings of inſolvency and ambition. This is not a competition between you and *Mr. Pitt*, but between the *Heir Apparent* and his unhappy father; it is not only, who ſhall be the *Miniſter*, but who ſhall be the *King*. I would

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not be underſtood to impute a project ſo infernal to the *Prince* himſelf, but to the party by whom he is ſupported, by whom he is adviſed, and by whom he is, at leaſt I hope he is, deceived. No, Sir! notwithſtanding all appearances and reports; notwithſtanding his political connexions; notwithſtanding his confidence even in *Mr. Sheridan*, I will not ſuppoſe him ſuch a monſter of depravity; I will not believe that he can triumph in a parent's malady, and exaggerate the ſymptoms; nor that he is eager to take advantage of this calamity, in order to glut the unnatural appetite of a premature ambition. Yet, Sir, I cannot but reflect, that as the name of his Royal Highneſs is unfortunately coupled with your party, he might have ſtepped forward upon this occaſion with peculiar dignity, and the moſt exalted policy, to diſavow your meaſures. Princes, I am told, have lately condeſcended to borrow the rhetoric of their inferiors; I will preſume therefore to ſuppoſe the following words ſpoken by the *Heir Apparent*: "My fellow ſubjects," he ſhould have ſaid, "I diſclaim all title to the "Regency,

" Regency, except that beſt and deareſt
" title, the free choice and preference of
" the nation. I diſavow the perſons, who,
" without my knowledge or concurrence,
" have aſſerted for me rights, which do not
" belong to me, and are more ſolicitous for
" their own intereſt than for my honour.
" Although ſome of them have been ho-
" noured with my notice, though I ad-
" mire their talents, and even credit their
" profeſſions, yet the intrigues of Faction
" are below the dignity of my ſtate, and I
" ſcorn to be ſupported by diſhonourable
" means.

" I am aware, that a thirſt for untimely
" Power, and an intimate combination with
" my Father's enemies, will neither con-
" ciliate your eſteem, nor engage your con-
" fidence: and, I truſt, that you think too
" highly of my heart and underſtanding,
" to imagine that I wantonly can ſacrifice
" your affection, or devote my patrimonial
" reverſion to rapacity and ruin. If the
" Parliament ſhall think proper to intruſt
" me with the reins of Government, du-

" ring the illneſs of my Father, I will en-
" deavour to prove that I deſerve their con-
" fidence: I wiſh for thoſe powers alone,
" which the preſent exigence requires,
" knowing that I am not the Owner but
" the Steward of the Crown. I ſhall
" therefore labour, as an honeſt Steward
" ought, to diſcharge my office to the ſatis-
" faction of my Father, and for the bene-
" fit of his eſtates; and feeling myſelf ac-
" countable to him for all I do, I will do
" nothing willingly to diſpleaſe him."—
Had the *Prince* of *Wales* expreſſed himſelf in this manner, and acted conſiſtently with his expreſſions, he would have gained the praiſe and credit of the nation, his government would have reſted on a firm eſtabliſhment, and he would not have expoſed himſelf to mortification and defeat.

But ſuch conduct would have fruſtrated the views of Oppoſition. Inſtead of it, therefore, we ſee cabals and jealouſies, factions within factions, parliamentary ſeduction, medical intrigues, and newſpaper fabrications. The beams of the RISING SUN have

have been collected on the putrid elements of corruption; and every artifice has been employed to procure the *grant* of those prerogatives, which you vainly laboured to seize by force. The question of Right being settled beyond dispute, you had next recourse to the argument of *expedience*, and would invest his Royal Highness with the plenitude of regal powers, on motives of political propriety. As this question, like the other, has undergone a full investigation, I shall make but few remarks upon it. I must observe, however, that the following proposition ought to be the groundwork of all reasoning on this subject; namely, that, since we trust his Royal Highness with the Government, not for the purposes of his own ambition—not to gratify the leeches that surround him—but for the benefit of his Father, and the welfare of his Father's subjects; it follows, that such powers only should be granted as may be thought conducive to those ends. Let it then be shewn that some national advantage will accrue from ennobling Mr. *Powys*, or any of the ample catalogue that Mr. *Burke* so obliging-

ly unfolded; or let it be ſimply aſcertained, that his *Majeſty*, whenever he recovers, will be charmed to find theſe Gentlemen enrolled amongſt the Peerage: in either of theſe caſes we might permit this exerciſe of the royal functions; but unleſs theſe demonſtrations can be given, let us not be prodigal of the King's authority, but remember that *He*, and *not his ſon*, is ſtill the ſource of honour, *for he ſtill is King*.

The ſame argument extends to the other limitations; andit would, I conceive, be extremely difficult to prove, that the diſmiſſion of the preſent houſehold, and the ſubſtitution of men, who are ſtrongly adverſe to the Sovereign, would be either beneficial to the nation, or agreeable to his *Majeſty*. Beſides, our pride, as Britons, ſhould forbid us to leave him deſtitute in his calamity. Should we not bluſh to hear it ſaid by foreigners, that the *Engliſh* tamely ſuffered their Chief Magiſtrate, the perſon who repreſents the whole majeſty of the Empire, to be inſulted in his ſickneſs, and plundered not only of his regal dignity, but even his domeſtic honours?—I muſt not omit another remark, on the ſubject of Reſtrictions,

ſtrictions, becauſe it refers to ſome of your declarations in the Houſe of Commons: Firſt, you accuſe Mr. Pitt of attacking the Prerogative, though it is notorious to all the world that he is protecting it from uſurpation; then recollecting how ill it would become the quondam Patriot to enter the liſts as Knight Errant of Prerogative, you own it to be true, that you have been a bitter foe to it when it was in vigour, but would ſcorn to take advantage of its weak and defenceleſs ſtate. In ſaying this, were you not aware to what an anſwer you expoſed yourſelf? Were you not, even at the very moment, ſtriving to take a cruel and mean advantage of the *King*'s misfortune? Did you not aim a mortal blow at his authority, when he was not able to reſiſt? And is this the generous, the manly conduct of which you boaſt? The Prerogative indeed you would now preſerve entire, becauſe you hoped to profit by it; but the perſon of the Monarch you would injure and inſult, tho' afflicted with diſeaſe, and diſabled by calamity.

But, Sir, you have urged a moſt extraordinary reaſon for aſſigning *all* the Regal Powers to the *Prince* of *Wales*, viz. the confidence which we place in the Virtues of his Royal Highneſs, and the moral certainty to be deduced from them, that he never will abuſe the Prerogatives with which he may be intruſted. As I underſtand your argument, we may reduce it to the following ſyllogiſm: If the Regent is popular and virtuous, he ought to be veſted with ample powers; but he is exemplary in his morals, eminent for his piety, ſingular for filial affection, juſtly and univerſally adored throughout the nation; therefore we can do no leſs than transfer to him the ſceptre of his Father, who being guilty of infirmity, and convicted of diſeaſe, has forfeited all title to the throne.

In private life, Sir, confidence may be an amiable quality, but it is a dangerous principle in the delegation of authority. If it be an argument for one extenſion, it may apply to any; and thus we may truſt away all our liberties and happineſs. It is indeed

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the peculiar genius of our conſtitution to be jealous of executive power, and we are naturally led to favour its oppoſers. Even you, Sir, had formerly ſome credit with the people, on this very ground; but you have taught them to be more ſparing of their confidence in future.

Beſides, unluckily for your argument, it ſomehow happens, that although the *Prince of Wales* may in fact poſſeſs all thoſe admirable qualities which you aſcribe to him, the people of England do not allow him credit for them; ſo that your reaſoning fails in the very premiſes. It was ingeniouſly puſhed in the Houſe of Commons, becauſe it could not there be contradicted: *Mr. Pitt* could not with propriety controvert the poſition, whatever he might think. Certain however it is, that, ſince the Reign of *Charles* the II. no Heir to the Crown of England has poſſeſſed ſo ſmall a portion of national eſteem and love. It generally happens, that the people are eager to extol the merits of their future Monarch, without examining minutely his pretenſions to them; frequently

too their zeal has ſoon ſubſided from experience. But here in oppoſition to the common rule, the Prince begins with being hated: I ſincerely wiſh that the contraſt may be perfect, and that he may end with being loved. At the commencement of this unhappy buſineſs, I could certainly have pointed out a line of conduct, by which he might have made himſelf as popular and powerful as any Prince that has ſwayed the Britiſh Empire. And I confeſs that, judging from the high opinion of his underſtanding, which I had been led to entertain, I thought he would have eagerly ſeized the opportunity of diſcarding his retinue of adventurers and buffoons: at ſome period he will be obliged to undertake this neceſſary meaſure; at no period could he do it with more honour to himſelf, or with more ſecurity of public approbation.

It would be foreign to my purpoſe were I to inveſtigate the *cauſes* of this ſtrange unpopularity; but ſince the fact is ſufficiently notorious, I will juſt obſerve, that, in one point of view, it is perhaps fortu-

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nate for the nation; for let us ſuppoſe that the preſent ſtate of popularity was reverſed; that our beloved Monarch was deteſted, and the *Prince of Wales* adored; that you, Sir, had not forfeited all pretentions to our confidence; and that *Mr. Pitt* was as odious as he is revered: I tremble to ſee what might have been the conſequence; we might have overlooked the Rights of the *King*, and the ſafety of the Conſtitution; and tranſmitted a precedent of injuſtice and uſurpation to future ages.

Before I quit the ſubject of popularity, I will venture to ſubmit one article of advice to the auguſt Perſonage in queſtion; advice, in which you, I believe, will very readily coincide. Let him beware of favouritiſm: it is a plant which does not flouriſh in this climate, and, if he tries to rear it, will choke the growth of popular affection.—Does it, indeed, befit a *Prince of Wales* to be the puppet of ſuch a thing as *Sheridan?* or if his Royal Highneſs be willing to bear ſuch degradation, can he think that the nation will be governed by his favourite?—

Thank

Thank God! we are not yet ſo humbled. Eloquence may captivate the mob, and cunning may deceive them: but men of ſenſe will examine characters, and ſearch for merits: they know, that the ſecret of conducting Empires lies not in flowers of fancy, nor in elegance of diction: it requires the lofty genius of a *Pitt*, not the ſcenic talents of a *Mr. Sheridan*. The predeceſſor of this perſon in the management of *Drury Lane*, was endowed with faculties of a ſimilar deſcription; equal in ſocial qualities, not inferior perhaps in compoſition, and far ſuperior in the powers of declamation. Beſides, *Garrick* was an honeſt man; at leaſt I have not heard that he was guilty of fraudulent tranſactions at any Theatre: he was not a bankrupt in fortune, or in fame. Yet ſo far was he from the ſtrange ambition of ſoaring from the conduct of a Play-houſe, to the government of Empires, that he even had the modeſty to decline a ſeat in Parliament. Were we, Sir, reduced to the choice of evils, we ſhould certainly prefer you to *Mr. Sheridan*: you are at leaſt a manly character: you do not ſkulk behind

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the curtain, and give advice, that you have not the courage to avow. You attack the Conſtitution it is true, but you do it openly, and diſdain to ſtab it in the dark, with the mean malice of Italian Policy.

As I am ready to give praiſe were it is due, I embrace this opportunity of applauding even you, for reſolving to exclude this perſon from the Cabinet, eſpecially from the Exchequer, for which, it ſeems, he had a longing inclination. The appointment of *Lord John* is, in truth, ridiculous enough, when we conſider whom he will ſucceed; but the other would have been a lamentable jeſt, a tragifarcical burleſque on revenue and œconomy.— *Mr. Sheridan* at the head of our finances! Why, Sir, the ſtreets of *Paris* would be illuminated; public rejoicings would be made, and thankſgivings offered up to Heaven, by all the enemies of the Britiſh nation.

Sir, the means which have been purſued to accompliſh your deſign, are as infamous as the deſign itſelf. I paſs by the influence,

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the promiſes, the menaces, the ſolicitations, the allurements, which have been employed ; methods reſorted to more ſucceſsfully in the Reign of your worthy coadjutor *Lord North*, though at that time they had not the honour of your approbation : yet I will aſſert, that they were never carried to ſuch extremes of infamy as at preſent ; the integrity of Parliament was never wooed with ſuch conſtant aſſiduity, nor inſulted with ſuch public offers : even Princes have diſgraced themſelves by perſonal applications, and expoſed themſelves to mortifying diſappointments : nay, one of them has been ſeen openly to canvaſs Officers on parade, and aſſure them that promotion in the army depended on their votes in Parliament.— But, Sir, the pains taken to infect the mind, and pervert the judgment of the public, exceed even your ſenatorial exertions, and betray a well-founded apprehenſion, that the people is averſe to your infernal plans. Beſides the hand-bills ſo induſtriouſly ſpread throughout the Country, inconceivable efforts have been made to buy the public prints, ſome of which may be juſtly deemed the common-ſewers of ſcurrility and falſehood.

falſehood. It is notorious, that a conſiderable ſum was paid for the purchaſe of one Newſpaper, and that the agreement was ſigned by a ſervant of his Royal Highneſs: and it is remarkable, that the paper ſo purchaſed, *and ſo directed*, has been one of the moſt virulent and atrocious in its calumnies againſt an amiable and exalted female: a fact, on which I forbear to make an obvious but mournful comment.

Through theſe, and other channels, with the auxiliary efforts of a certain medico-political goſſip, the moſt ſcandalous and abominable falſehoods have been diffuſed; ſome of them I ſhall proceed to notice; with this preliminary obſervation, that the cauſe muſt indeed be bad, which requires or reſorts to ſuch expedients.

1ſt. Infinite pains have been employed to repreſent the King's actual condition, and likelihood of his recovery, in the moſt unfavourable light. Yet the Committee, demanded by yourſelves, for the *avowed* purpoſe

poſe of proving a diminution of probability, though *ſecretly* with further views; this ſame Committee did but confirm our hopes: Even Dr. *Warren** was reduced to own, that probability was in favour of a cure; and ſince the period of this examination, the moſt encouraging appearances have certainly taken place. Therefore, notwithſtanding the private whiſpers, and public declarations of your party; notwithſtanding the black Miniſter of Diſeaſe hovers through the Capital, and ſheds his poiſon on our hopes; we yet have ſolid grounds of comfort, and even of ſanguine expectation. I examine not the views of that malignant ſpirit, nor the promiſes which tempt him; but his ſyſtematic determination is evident, and already has procured him the execration of mankind.

* This Gentleman, I underſtand, has lately changed his tone, and admits that his Majeſty is *better:* to be conſiſtent, the Doctor ſhould pronounce his Royal Patient *perfectly recovered*; for, not long ago, he maintained that there was no intermediate ſtage in this diſorder.

2dly. It

2dly. It has been aſſerted, that, although his Majeſty ſhould apparently recover, he may indeed be equal to the affairs of private life, and qualified to enjoy domeſtic comforts, and the pleaſures of ſociety; but may ſtill be totally unfit to reſume the Government, and conduct the buſineſs of an Empire. I do not doubt, Sir, the intententions of your party on the ſubject; and verily believe that, when the King recovers, they will deny the cure: I conſider the doctrine above-mentioned, as prophetic of your future conduct, and the argument on which you will oppoſe his Majeſty's reſumption of the Crown: but believe me, Sir, the nation will not ſuffer you, nor Mr. *Sheridan*, nor Mr. *Burke*; no, Sir; nor the *Prince of Wales*, to decide upon that occaſion.

A third opinion, which has been ſpread with induſtry, although, from the nature of the caſe, it could not poſſibly be aſcertained, is the following; that when the King is reſtored to health, he will *decline*, of his own accord, the management of State affairs,

affairs, and even retire to another country. Unleſs Lord *Loughborough*, or ſome of your other Caledonian friends, have the gift of ſecond ſight, I know not on what ground you can reſt this ſuppoſition, or predict the future ſentiments and conduct of his Majeſty. For my own part, I am well perſuaded that he will not abandon us to the rapine of a mercileſs and hungry crew.—He undoubtedly loves his people; and, even in the height of his diſorder, his mind, I am told, was ever fraught with the tendereſt anxiety for their happineſs. Will he then love us with leſs fervency, when he finds how zealous we have been in his defence, how firmly we have guarded his prerogative, how bitterly we have mourned his loſs, how earneſtly we implore his reſtoration? Will the warmth of our attachment, and the ſteadineſs of our allegiance incline him to deſert us? I cannot—I will not think it. In the mean time, I give you credit for endeavouring to verify the prediction: for aſſuredly the *King* would not reſume the Government if the poſſibility of reſumption were precluded; nor would he ſtay in Eng-

land to be the *ſhadow* of a King, and permit another to enjoy the ſubſtance.

It is the evident deſign and tendency of theſe opinions, to direct the eyes of men upon the *Prince of Wales*, as the actual and eſtabliſhed Sovereign ; * and by exciting their political hopes and fears, to create that ſecret influence in Parliament, againſt which you have formerly contended. Indeed I do not ground this opinion upon inference alone, for it was openly avowed in the Houſe of Commons. What elſe can be the meaning of your black and treaſonous aſſertion, " that the the King is no longer entitled to our allegiance ;" and that " we muſt now transfer it to the *Prince of Wales.* " To this I will ſubſcribe, when you perſuade me to withdraw from my native country the reſpect, attachment, and enthuſiaſm, with which ſhe fires me, and transfer thoſe ſen-

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* When poor *Burke* declares in Parliament, that, " The Supreme Being has hurled the Sovereign from his Throne, and reduced him to a level with the meaneſt Peaſant ;" do we feel more indignation at the ſentiment, or more pity for the Speaker ?——

timents to you, becauſe you *repreſent* her in the Houſe of Commons. We admire the brightneſs, and acknowledge the convenience of the planet which adorns the night; but we remember alſo, that it ſhines with borrowed light, and derives its ſplendour from that majeſtic luminary, whoſe return diſpels the gloom, and reanimates the world.

4th, There is another fabrication, of which I think it right to take ſome notice, becauſe it was intended to counteract our hopes of the King's recovery. I allude to the illiberal attacks upon the character of *Dr. Willis*, whoſe worth, benevolence, and ſkill, the country in which he lives will readily atteſt. It is true, that he has ſome peculiarities, which to you may appear defects: he was never converſant with political intrigues, nor aware that they form a neceſſary branch of his profeſſion: he was even ignorant, that Medical reputation, muſt be ſought for at the toilette and the tea-table; and that his endeavours to reſtore his patient ſhould be ſubſervient to the views of oppoſition. Simple in his manner, plain in his diſcourſe,

diſcourſe; he is not fit to cope with the ſubtlety of *Mr. Sheridan*; he is eaſily enſnared by fraud and artifice, and knows not how to deal with thoſe who perſecute and perplex him: yet independent as he is, of any party, and not involved in any politics, he is in, my opinion, the better qualified for his preſent ſituation on thoſe accounts.

5th, It would have been ſurpriſing, if at this conjuncture *Mr. Pitt* had eſcaped the obloquy with which he is honoured by your party, upon moſt occaſions: I therefore was not ſurpriſed when I heard his conduct in this delicate emergency attributed to ſelfiſh and clandeſtine motives. His fame however is too well eſtabliſhed to be injured by vague hints or impudent aſſertions: his integrity is almoſt proverbial; and though many of your friends may treat it with contempt, I believe the nation at large conſiders it as an eligible quality in a Miniſter: it is certainly unuſual, and will in vain be looked for in the future Government. I can readily conceive that *Mr. Pitt's* profeſſions, in reſpect to his conduct when out of power,

will not be credited by oppoſition: we are apt to judge of others by ourſelves; and according to this rule, how is it poſſible that you ſhould truſt the moderation or conſiſtency, or veracity of *Mr. Pitt*? It is remarkable, however, that in your preſent attack upon his character, you diſcover the ſame marks of incongruity, which have attended you throughout the buſineſs: for whilſt you accuſe him of ſelfiſh motives, you alſo menace him with the anger of the *Prince of Wales*, and aſſure him, that his preſent ſyſtem will exclude him irretrievably from the favour of his Royal Highneſs:—to debar himſelf the proſpect of indulging a bad paſſion, is indeed a ſingular proof of its exiſtence. The truth is, he has gained immortal honour by his conduct: moderate, but firm, he ſought at once to eſtabliſh the Rights of the Conſtitution, and ſecure the intereſts of the Monarch: and whilſt regardleſs of himſelf, he incurred, as you ſay, the anger of his Royal Highneſs, by a ſtrict attention to his duty, he was never wanting in that Reſpect, which is due to the elevated ſtation of an Heir Apparent. Nay, even with

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regard to *you*, he diſplayed a candour that wreſted aukward commendations from *Mr. Burke*. With that ill fortune which is apt to wait on vicious policy, you have really conferred a benefit, where you meant to do an injury; and by the ſtriking contraſt of your behaviour, have contributed to raiſe the Miniſter in our opinion, even higher than he ſtood before.

I am aware that having thus expreſſed my ſentiments, I ſhall be called a Partizan of *Mr. Pitt*: were it true, I ſee nothing reprehenſible in the charge: but in fact, I barely had the honour of being known to him at College, and have ſcarcely ſeen him ſince he became a public man: I never held of him, nor ſolicited, any ſituation, nor ever have received from him any favours of any denomination. I confeſs myſelf, indeed, the Partizan of virtue: I acknowledge my attachment to the *merits* but not the *perſon* of the Miniſter. He has reſtored the credit, and extended the Commerce of this Country: he has given her proſperity at home, and conſequence abroad. As an Engliſhman I thank him for theſe benefits; every honeſt Engliſhman unites

in this tribute of applauſe; and you, Sir, who ſo recently have left the Continent, can teſtify the exalted admiration with which he is regarded by Foreign Nations. That he has never erred, I will not pretend to ſay, for who is totally exempt from errors? but in him they certainly have not been frequent or conſiderable; and, which is yet more eſſential, they cannot be imputed to bad intentions: by miſtake he may have acted wrong; but, I verily believe, never by deſign. Let us advert for inſtance to a meaſure, which has been cenſured more than any other; a meaſure on which you built the remnant of your ſhip-wrecked hopes, (though allowing the Miniſter to be highly culpable, it muſt be acknowledged, that one man's fault is a very bad foundation for another's popularity;) do you imagine, Sir, that *Mr. Pitt* propoſed the Shop-tax with a view to tyrannize the Metropolis? the ſuppoſition would imply, that he is devoid of common ſenſe, as well as honeſty; for ſuch the Miniſter muſt be who wantonly provokes the odium of ſuch a place as this. I do not examine whether the tax in queſtion

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be fair or partial: I maintain only that he could not *intend* it as a meaſure of injuſtice and oppreſſion.

It has been alledged however, by the enemies of *Mr. Pitt*, that he is addicted to the vice of chaſtity; and I own that I am not enough acquainted with the *interiour* of his private life, to know the truth of this dreadful accuſation. If he has the merit of incontinence, he has at leaſt the modeſty to hide it; and I certainly cannot undertake to prove in his defence, that he has debauched the wives of other men, and diſturbed the happineſs of families; not to have engaged in theſe exploits, or not to publiſh them, may injure his reputation in the faſhionable world, but poſſibly may not render him leſs honeſt as a man, or leſs able as a Miniſter.

Perhaps, however, a Miniſter may be looked on as a fair object of abuſe: perhaps too, when you inſinuate the badneſs of his motives on this occaſion, you may ſpeak the real ſentiments of your heart, not believing the exiſtence of political integrity. But, with what arguments can you palliate the cruel and

impious attacks made on the character of another perſon, the moſt exalted of her ſex, both in qualities and ſtation? who, it ſeems, had not already miſeries enough, though, beſides the illneſs of a huſband, whom ſhe loves, ſhe was doomed to ſorrow *ſharper than a Serpent's tooth?*——I thought there was a ſanctity in woe, that malignity itſelf would reverence.

To ſcatter unprovoked and unmerited abuſe is always diabolical; but to ſeize the moment of diſtreſs;—to lacerate with public ſcandal, the heart which is throbbing with domeſtic griefs—I had hoped there was not a monſter capable of ſuch depravity; at leaſt I hoped that he could not be a Briton.—— Yet, although in the preſent age neither ſex, nor ſtation, nor extraordinary merit, nor calamity itſelf, can ſecure us from the venom of malevolence, the minds of honeſt men, I truſt, cannot be poiſoned by ſuch licentious defamation; they will not forgot the ſtriking virtues of her character,—the due diſcharge of moral and religious duties, the exemplary caſt of her domeſtic life: they

they will reflect, that ſhe never was ſuſpected, at any period, of engaging in cabals; that her heart and her underſtanding equally ſecured her from ſuch a line of conduct; that it argues folly, as well as malice, to ſuppoſe that, in the preſent caſe, ſinking as ſhe is beneath the preſſure of misfortune, ſhe would conſent to abjure the ſyſtem ſhe had happily purſued, and involve herſelf in all the danger of a crooked policy.

This, Sir, is not the vain language of panegyric; but the rooted ſentiments of a nation which admires her high endowments, and venerates her ſplendid virtues:—And can you ſeriouſly think, that ſhe, whom the rude tongue of ſlander hath ſeldom ventured to moleſt; who, ſince her firſt arrival in this country, has uniformly grown in our eſtimation, can be injured by the miſerable malice of your banditti? No, Sir! notwithſtanding the violence of diſappointed Faction,—notwithſtanding the peſtilential blaſt of calumny,—this exalted woman will ever be the object of our love and veneration. Even the preſent age will vindicate her me-

rits, and hiſtory ſhall record them, for the inſtruction of poſterity.

And after all, what is the ſum of theſe accuſations? Why, ſimply, that the Queen is guilty of the heinous crime of wiſhing for the King's recovery, and is eager to impart her hopes, and impreſs them on the nation. But we are told, ſhe has no right to interfere: who then has the right? If a tender and affectionate wife be not a proper perſon to take care that the phyſicians do their duty, I beg to know who is the proper perſon. To be ſure no one can be blind to the filial piety of the Heir Apparent;—no one can be ignorant of the kind *ſolicitude* which he has marked on this occaſion, nor the *amiable delicacy* which he has diſcovered in reſpect to his father's rights; but though he be *notorious* for all theſe qualities, yet from the analogy of law, his Royal Highneſs is a moſt improper perſon to interfere, becauſe he is the Heir to his father's Crown; and the law is ſo ill-bred as to refuſe the credit, which I, you ſee, am diſpoſed to grant

grant him, for his regard to duty, and contempt of intereſt.

I do not think it neceſſary to extend my ſtrictures on the infamous fabrications with which the world is peſtered; and which I am confident, will not produce the permanent effect intended, ſince the drift of them is eaſily perceived.—But is it poſſible to help obſerving, and drawing an obvious concluſion from the remark, that, notwithſtanding the great abilities, and ariſtocratic influence in your Party; notwithſtanding all the ſplendour of the *riſing Sun*, and the abſence of the parent luminary, which, I truſt, will *riſe again*, (though you may think, it ſet for ever) notwithſtanding the cabals, the promiſes, the threats, the falſhoods, and all the ſtratagems that have been employed; you could not carry a majority, even in the Houſe of Commons; and the national opinion is deciſively againſt you?

You have, indeed, made ſome little acquiſitions of ingratitude and treachery: the witty Q——y, the diſintereſted L——n, are

are proſelytes worthy of your cauſe. The generous P——y too, forgetful of his late profeſſions, and the recent mark of his Sovereign's favour, has polluted his Northumbrian blood with baſe apoſtacy. That blood, however, flowed to him through a female channel, and, therefore, ſome allowance ſhould be made for caprice and frailty.—— Yeſterday, a garter and a ribbond caught his fancy; to-day, the Ordnance inflames his paſſion;—to-morrow, perhaps, ſome other gewgaw will debauch him; and thus his virtue is a prey to any ſuitor, the leaſt knowing in political ſeduction.——But that M——y ſhould ſoil the laurels he ſo lately earned, ſhould abandon the duties of his office, and ſneaking hither in the guiſe of friendſhip, dedicate the firſt-fruits of "His bluſhing honours," to the ruin of his Benefactor;—Surely, Sir, this man outſtrips the common herd of traitors, and deſerves the recompence of ſuperior infamy.—Yet, we muſt own, that there is one degree above it, when we contemplate the youth, who, in ſpite of decency and duty,—in ſpite of gratitude for uniform and unbounded fondneſs,—

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in defiance of public ſentiment, and general indignation, has exhibited his callous front in the open Senate, and endeavoured to cruſh an unhappy father.—As to the D— of C———d,—but let us paſs on to ſomething of more importance.

Theſe, and a few other converts, are the rotten fruit of laborious corruption; but will they compenſate the hatred of a nation?—will the applauſe of Faction, and the ſmiles of perfidy, ſcreen you from our execration? No! Sir—though we could forget your Parliamentary tranſgreſſions, yet the indecent joy, the inhuman exultation, which your party has exhibited, would alone condemn you in any heart of feeling. The alternate elevation and depreſſion of your ſpirits, are the ſure ſymptoms of violence or abatement in the King's diſorder: if we meet one of you in the ſtreets, it is needleſs to make enquiries; the intelligence from Kew is written on his countenance: if he look dejected, our hopes increaſe; if he ſmile, we tremble for the Sovereign's health, and the nation's

nation's welfare*.—Sir, this is not pleaſantry, but ſimple fact: yet you ſhould have known, that, in the Britiſh character, no virtue is more conſpicuous than humanity: nor any which the nation is more jealous of maintaining in the eyes of Europe; and ſhall we not reſent this daring violation of it, directed too againſt a perſon whoſe rank demands reſpect, and whoſe character begets attachment? The *Prince* may pardon it, but the nation never can.

It is true, that you gain the immediate object for which you have been labouring; we ſhall probably behold you once more the miniſter of this country: but I will venture to

* The following anecdote is authentic, and exhibits a ſpecimen of oppoſition ſympathy. In the early part of his *Majeſty*'s diſorder, a certain Peer, of theatrical notoriety, on entering a Ducal houſe, was ſurrounded by a crowd of harpies; his aſpect was more forlorn than even nature had intended it, and, with a tone of tragical deſpair, he informed them that the news he brought was very bad. "Bad news! they all exclaimed,—"*what then is the king better?*"—Yes, thank heaven! he *is* better; his recovery ſhall check their tranſports, and overwhelm their projects with ruin and confuſion.

to affirm that no adminiſtration ever commenced with ſo much ignominy as your's will do; in contradiction to the well-known ſentiments of the monarch; in defiance too of Parliamentary opinion, and national diſcontent. I am almoſt ſurprized, that (even *unbounded* as *your ſtomach* is) you can either wiſh, or dare to accept the government upon ſuch conditions: for how is it poſſible that you ſhould proſper?——You will tell me, perhaps, that moſt of your friends had nothing to loſe, and much to gain; that their character was blaſted, and their views deſtroyed: *domi inopia, foris æs alienum*; *mala res ſpes multo aſperior*; that to deſperate conditions deſperate expedients muſt be applied; in ſhort, that reduced as they are, to the laſt ſtake, they muſt hazard a raſh game, and try to juggle the opponents whom they cannot fairly overcome. How far political morality may approve theſe maxims, I do not know; but certain I, am that we ſhould carefully watch the Party which is guided by them.

In the mean time, proceed in your eſtabliſhed courſe; continue to ſelect each abandoned profligate for your ſocial intercourſe, each noble idiot for the tool of your ambition. Let the worthy Duke, who is neither wearied nor aſhamed to be the ſlave of ſuch a crew, let him preſide at the Board of Treaſury, though his knowledge of that department be confined to the firſt rudiments of arithmetic.—Drag the modern Cincinnatus—not from the plough indeed, but---from the chace, and force him on the bench of the Exchequer. He is, I believe, an honeſt man; (it is proper to exhibit a few ſuch for oſtentation;) but an honeſt man is not, of neceſſity, an able financier; and I doubt his Lordſhip will make a deſpicable figure after *Mr. Pitt.* But the Exchequer will, in reality, perhaps, be under *your* direction; and, upon this hypotheſis, it might be curious to gueſs the ſyſtem which will be adopted. Will you apply to the public burthens the ſame alleviation which has been ſo uſeful in your own diſtreſſes, and eſtabliſh a State-Faro for the liquidation of our debt? then might youths of fortune

tune be enticed to ruin, on the principles of public ſpirit, and patriotic zeal; they might be invited to devote themſelves, like Curtius, for the welfare of their country, and to periſh in the dark gulph of a ſinking fund.

As to the ſeals, let them be committed to my *Lord C—f J——e*; with a head fertile in miſchief, and a heart incapable of remorſe, he may ſerve you well;—yet, beware,—he is verſed in falſehood, and has been accuſtomed to betray. To prove your zeal for the happineſs of Indoſtan, let *Mr. Sheridan* have that department; and inveſt him alſo with the charge of reading lectures to his pupil on the practice of filial duty: we remember that he is ſingularly fitted for that employment.—Let not your efforts for the virtuous *Jack Townſhend* ceaſe with his election; but procure for him ſome office ſuitable to his merits:—in ſhort, let every appointment be an inſult on our patience; but do not fancy that your triumph will be durable, nor that the people will long ſubmit to be governed by you. Experience has taught them to know you thoroughly; and, though the feelings of

humanity and affection did not rouſe them in the cauſe of their inſulted Sovereign, their intereſt alone would determine their averſion to *Mr. Fox*. In one word, Sir, you muſt accept the mingled ſentiment, with which they admire your talents, and deteſt your principles.

From you, Sir, I turn with pleaſure to addreſs my fellow-ſubjects. I conjure them to preſevere in thoſe exertions, which have, hitherto, been crowned with honour and ſucceſs. Let us not abandon our unhappy Monarch, who, though faſt recovering, is yet unable to reſiſt the malice of his enemies: let us ſoften the adverſity of him in whoſe proſperity we ſhared: let us form a ſhield around his ſacred perſon, and protect it from iniquity and inſult. At the period (for which we pray) when we ſhall once more attend him to the throne with tranſport and acclamation, he ſhall thank us for our fidelity; he ſhall conſecrate the evening of his life to prove his gratitude for our attachment, and his tenderneſs for our welfare. Above all, my countrymen,

countrymen, let us narrowly obſerve the conduct of thoſe men, who have perpetrated foul enormities to *gain* their power, who will ſhrink from nothing to *ſecure* it: let it be our care, as it is our intereſt, to guard the fabrick of proſperity, which is reared by a vigorous and upright Miniſter.

Feb. 13, 1789.

FINIS.

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